

City of Key West

Sustainability Advisory Board - Annual Report

January 21, 2011

The Key West Sustainability Advisory Board (SAB) was established, January 22, 2009, by the Key West City Commission via resolution # 09-021. This is a nine-member board appointed, one each, by the City Commissioners and Mayor, as well as, two high school student alternate members appointed by the Mayor. There are currently 5 regular members and no student members sitting on the board. The seats for Commissioners Rossi and Lopez, and the 2 student member seats are currently vacant.

The stated mission of the SAB is to;

1. Advise and assist the City Commission in efforts to make city operations more sustainable.
2. Assist in the development of plans and policies to enhance the sustainability of the city as a whole.
3. Educate and support other Key West organizations to become more sustainable.
4. Educate and engage the public in efforts to make the community of Key West, including residents, businesses and institutions, more sustainable.

Sustainability is defined by the city as; "meeting the vital human needs of the present without compromising the ability to meet future needs".

The first meeting of the board was held on July 16, 2009. Officers were elected and procedures established. Dr. Ross Williams was elected chairman and Mr. Richard Puente was elected vice-chairman. The first year was a formative one, during which much of the work done was in trying to understand the various issues facing the city, residents and commercial sector regarding sustainability and the goals we have set for ourselves as a city to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and increase efficiencies.

Fortunately, much of the hard work had already been done by the Climate Action Team, with the help of numerous other groups and individuals and was formalized in the Climate Action Plan document. The SAB's first advisory resolution to the City Commission was a recommendation to fully adopt the Climate Action Plan, which the City Commission did by unanimous approval on October 20, 2009.

The Climate Action Plan is a comprehensive document which touches on all aspects of sustainability and is a living document that is meant to change and adapt as the City moves forward in its efforts to reduce greenhouse gases (GHG) and achieve sustainability.

The City Commission has directed the City Manager to implement the Climate Action Plan to reduce the municipal and community greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by 15%

by 2015. The Climate Action Plan is our "Roadmap to Sustainability" into the future and the SAB will work to help keep the city focused and on track with this plan.

An overview of the energy saving data regarding cool roof technology was presented to the Historic Architectural Review Commission (HARC) at a workshop in April, 2010. The SAB believes that cool roof technology is an important high-return-on-investment energy-saving device and intends to advocate in 2011 for implementation on city buildings and areas of the city that are not affected by historic guidelines.

Other issues brought before the board in 2010 include the energy efficient LED street light demonstration project and the solid waste master plan proposal, both approved by the City Commission. The SAB is also currently engaged in the development of a historical timeline/project matrix spreadsheet of the board's activities to help track ongoing projects and activities and to give continuity, context and direction to the efforts of future boards.

Recently retired environmental programs manager, Annalise Mannix, was instrumental in the initial growth and development of the SAB and played an important role as liaison between the SAB and the city. She brought detailed reports, as well as energy and enthusiasm, to SAB meetings, keeping the board abreast of City efforts to reduce green house gas emissions (GHG), improve efficiencies and further the goals of sustainability.

A main focus for the board in 2011 will be to assist the City in prioritizing and implementing the Climate Action Plan, to determine which projects can and should be implemented based on greatest need, greatest reduction of GHG emissions and greatest reduction of operational expenses, with consideration to budgetary constraints.

The members of the SAB believe that in order for the board to be effective and give meaningful input to the City Commission moving forward that a replacement liaison position is necessary to prevent the SAB from operating in a vacuum.

Because the City approved Climate Action Plan calls for the hiring of an Energy Manager ***** the SAB has looked at a number of the more sustainably progressive cities around the country and one commonality they all share is a dedicated "sustainability coordinator / green programs coordinator" staff position often working within an Office of Sustainability. It is expected that expenses for such a position would be returned in energy cost savings and reduced operational expenses.

Ross Williams, chairman
Key West Sustainability Advisory Board